

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action mailed on September 21, 2006.

Claims 2-9, 11-15, 17-21, 23, 24, 26-35 are amended. Claim 1 is cancelled. Claims 2-24 and 26-35 are pending.

Claims 5-12, 15-19, and 32 are allowed.

Claims 1-4, 13, 14, 20-24, 27 and 33-35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as being anticipated by Kitagawa et al. (U.S. Patent 5,055,923).

Claims 26 and 28-31 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Kitagawa et al. in further view of Japanese Document 10-335128 to Suzuki.

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections in view of the amended claims and the following comments.

Discussion of Amended Claims

Claim 1 is cancelled.

Claims 5-12, 15-19, and 32 have been allowed.

Dependent claims 2-4, 13, 14, 20, 23, 24, 26-31, and 33-35 are amended to depend from allowed claim 5.

Claims 5-9, 11-13, 15, 17-19, 21, 26, 28-32, and 34 are amended to correct potential antecedent basis problems in the claim language.

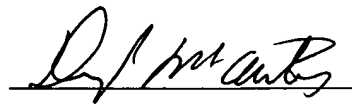
Accordingly, each of the pending claims has either been allowed or ultimately depends from an allowed claim. Applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for immediate allowance.

Further remarks regarding the asserted relationship between Applicant's claims and the prior art are not deemed necessary, in view of the amended claims and the foregoing discussion. Applicant's silence as to any of the Examiner's comments is not indicative of acquiescence to the stated grounds of rejection.

Conclusion

In view of the above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider this application, allow each of the pending claims and to pass this application on to an early issue. If there are any remaining issues that need to be addressed in order to place this application into condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. McAllister", is written over a horizontal line.

Douglas M. McAllister
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 37,886
Lipsitz & McAllister, LLC
755 Main Street
Monroe, CT 06468
(203) 459-0200

ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.: HOE-960
DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2006